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FM BEIRUT 180830Z NOV 83

TO FLASH F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 650 OF 18 NOVEMBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (DS11), WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, DAMASCUS,  
AMMAN

SAVING COMMANDER BRITFORLEB

MS

YOUR TELNO 484: BEIRUT SECURITY.

1. WE HAVE BEEN GIVING EXTENSIVE THOUGHT TO THE SECURITY OF OUR PERSONS AND PREMISES IN RECENT DAYS. THIS HAS BEEN SHARPENED BY THIS WEEK'S EARLIER ALERTS. I KNOW THAT THE SAME IS TRUE AT BRITFORLEB. I SPENT 16 NOVEMBER THERE AND WE ARE IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH FERGUSON. THE MEASURES APPROVED FOLLOWING THE KILSON VISIT ARE BEING PUT INTO EFFECT WITH UTMOST URGENCY: IN PARTICULAR THE VITAL DIVERSION ROAD WILL BE COMPLETED, AND TRAFFIC FORTHWITH DIVERTED, LATER TODAY. THE ROCKET SCREENS AT BRITFORLEB ARE ALMOST COMPLETE AND WORK WILL THEN START ON THE EMBASSY'S. FOR THE EMBASSY, THE MAIN THREAT HOWEVER STILL SEEMS TO BE A VEHICLE BOMB, POSSIBLY DELIVERED IN A CAPTURED APC. THOSE MANNING THE CHECKPOINTS HAVE BEEN WARNED AGAINST DELIVERY OF BOMBS BY SUBTERFUGE AS WELL AS BY GATECRASHING. THE DRAGONS TEETH, METAL CALTROP-STYLE OBSTRUCTIONS AND HEAVIER BARRIER POLES ARE NOW IN POSITION, THOUGH WE ARE STILL AWAITING THE CYLINDRICAL CONCRETE BARRIERS THAT THE LEBANESE ARE TO SUPPLY FOR THE FAR CARRIAGEWAY OF THE CORNICHE, AND ARE AT PRESENT RELYING ON METAL OBSTRUCTIONS. WE PLAN TO INSTAL A SMALL MARINE DETACHMENT IN SOME OF THE OUTBUILDINGS AT THE REAR WHO WOULD REINFORCE OUR PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SURREPTITIOUS PLANTING OF EXPLOSIVES NEAR OUR BUILDING. WE ALSO NOW HAVE AS FEW PEOPLE AT WORK ON THE OUTER (IE ROAD) SIDE OF OUR OFFICE BUILDING AS POSSIBLE.

2. AT MY RESIDENCE WORK STARTED ON 16 NOVEMBER ON HEIGHTENING THE WALL, IMPROVED LIGHTING AND INTRUDER ALARMS. I DO NOT FAVOUR ASKING THE LEBANESE TO PUT UP ROAD BLOCKS THERE. THE RESIDENCE DOES NOT PRESENT A 'MASS' TARGET COMPARABLE TO THE OFFICE OR THE US, FRENCH AND ISRAELI MILITARY HQS. BLOCKING THE CORNICHE HAS ALREADY CAUSED MASSIVE TRAFFIC JAMS ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY AND I HAVE NO WISH TO ADD TO THE MURMURING OF THOSE INCONVENIENCED. THE CABINET 'DECIDED' RECENTLY TO REOPEN THE CORNICHE. MY US COLLEAGUE HAD TO MAKE TOUGH REPRESENTATIONS TO KEEP IT CLOSED. WE ARE HOWEVER GIVING CAREFUL THOUGHT TO ASKING FOR A PERMANENT MILITARY PRESENCE AT MY RESIDENCE. IF A BRITISH FORCE IS TO BE INVOLVED, THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE SENT ADDITIONALLY, SINCE BRITFORLEB CANNOT SPARE ANY MEN. I SHALL TELEGRAPH SEPARATELY ON THIS.

3. I BELIEVE THAT THE MOST REALISTIC ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS WE CAN NOW TAKE ARE IN THE FIELD OF PHYSICAL ABSENCE AND DISPERSAL. THIS WILL HAPPEN IN ANY CASE TODAY AS A RESULT OF MY PROGRAMME (CREDENTIALS) AND AT THE WEEKEND. THEREAFTER WE SHALL GIVE ATTENTION TO THE VARIATION OF ROUTINE, AVOIDANCE OF REGULAR CONCENTRATIONS OF PERSONNEL (EG THE WEEKLY OFFICE MEETING) AND TO PROCEDURES FOR EVACUATING OUR BUILDING FAST (EG PRACTICES).

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4. WE DO NOT FAVOUR FURTHER SLIMMING DOWN OF THE EMBASSY STAFF. ALREADY WE ARE WITHOUT A COMMERCIAL SECRETARY AND OUR SUPPLEMENTARY CHANCERY OFFICER WILL BE LEAVING SOON. APART FROM THOSE DOING ESSENTIAL WORK IN THE OFFICE (ACCOUNTS, COMMUNICATIONS, VISAS), THE STAFF SPEND A LOT OF TIME OUT OF THE OFFICE. SO THE TARGET HERE IS SMALL. AS FOR BRITFORLEB, WE SEE NO POINT IN IMPOSING THE OPERATIONAL DISADVANTAGES OF SLIMMING THE FORCE AT THE MARGINS. IT IS ALREADY VERY SMALL. ALL THOSE WHO SUPPLEMENT THE BASIC SABRE SQUADRON ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY HAVE A JOB TO DO. CUTTING THE NUMBERS WOULD ONLY REDUCE THE VULNERABILITY OF THE TARGET VERY MARGINALLY (IF AT ALL). THE BAD CONSEQUENCES IF IT WAS HIT WOULD BE JUST THE SAME.

5. WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE BRITISH BANKS AND BRITISH COUNCIL. WE HAVE WARNED THEM OF THE RISKS. WE DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD URGE ANY OF THEM TO TAKE ANY SPECIAL MEASURES THAT THEY ARE NOT TAKING ALREADY. THE BRITISH COUNCIL COULD BE A TARGET. BUT THEY HAVE TAKEN A LOT OF PRECAUTIONS RECENTLY (THEY HAVE A REGULAR POLICE GUARD) AND CANNOT GO FURTHER WITHOUT CUTTING FUNCTIONS. STAFF NUMBERS FOR INSTANCE ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO ACTIVITY (CLASSES). WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE ACTING REPRESENTATIVE. HE AND WE AGREE THAT, SHORT OF CLOSING THE OFFICE, THERE IS NO MEASURE THAT COULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE SECURITY. IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO CLOSE AT PRESENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A MUCH MORE SPECIFIC THREAT AGAINST THE COUNCIL.

MTERS

BT

LIMITED  
NENAD  
DEF D  
SECURITY D  
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PS/PUS  
SIR J BULLARD  
SIR J LEAHY  
MR WRIGHT  
MR GERTON

COPIES TO  
MR COLES NO 10 DOWNING ST

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Lebanon

CF: no need for telegram  
ATC knows that this  
is now being fixed for 30/11.

DW 010

**IMMEDIATE  
ADVANCE COPY**

18/1305

23/11

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LUF 872/18

OO FCO DESKBY 181400Z

RR WASHINGTON

RR DAMASCUS

RR TEL AVIV

RR PARIS

RR ROME

GR 160

Mr. Barclay  
I have asked the F.C.O.  
to examine whether the word  
layen after after instead.  
If not, you had better send  
me a telegram.

Head NENAS  
Head MED.  
Head Defence  
Ps (2)  
Ps / Mr. Luce  
Ps / Mr. S.  
Sir J. Bullard  
Sir J. Leahy  
Mr. Egerton

A.F.C. 21/11

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 181400Z FCO

FM BEIRUT 181235Z NOV 83

TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 651 OF 18 NOVEMBER 1983

INFO WASHINGTON, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, PARIS, ROME.

MY TELNO 639: PRESIDENT GEMAYEL'S TRAVELS.

1. HE WAS SUMMONED AT SHORT NOTICE TO PRESENT MY CREDENTIALS TODAY (18 NOVEMBER). WITH REFERENCE TO WHAT HE HAD TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON 15 NOVEMBER (YOUR TELNO 475), PRESIDENT GEMAYEL SAID THAT HE WOULD MUCH LIKE TO PAY A WORKING VISIT TO THE UK, NOT NECESSARILY LINKED TO HIS FORTHCOMING JOURNEY TO AMERICA (WHICH HE SAID WAS NOW UNLIKELY TO OCCUR BEFORE 5 DECEMBER). HE ASKED WHETHER A ONE DAY VISIT ON ABOUT 30 NOV OR 1 DEC WOULD BE CONVENIENT.

2. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WANTED A WORKING VISIT QUOTE WITHOUT CEREMONY UNQUOTE. FROM WHAT HE SAID AND FROM SOMETHING THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID EARLIER, HE BELIEVE HE WANTS TO VISIT THE UK AND ITALY, THE TWO MNF CAPITALS HE HAS NOT YET BEEN TO SINCE THE CURRENT CONFLICT BEGAN.